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Speeches

Paper Work Cutdown Is Elastic

Using a script of 17 double-spaced pages and a dozen huge charts, the Archivist of the United States informed a House subcommittee yesterday that Government paperwork eats up about 7 per cent of the Federal budget—some \$7 billion in fiscal 1966.

"Almost 30 per cent of all Federal employees find much of their time consumed by paperwork," said Robert H. Bahmer, as about 30 people in the hearing room followed his testimony by reading copies of it.

In fact, said Bahmer, studies show that Federal records increased from 24.5 million cubic feet in 1962 to 25.1 million in 1964 (about 3000 sheets of standard-size paper equal a cubic foot).

But the National Archives and Records Service of the General Services Administration has been struggling hard to attack the pile-up, he said, noting that about 55 paperwork surveys "lasting months" will be undertaken this year.

And efforts are paying off, Bahmer said, pointing out that 22 award nominees at last year's Federal Paperwork Management Award Dinner had saved their agencies a total of \$100 million.

Other projects to cut down paperwork have included the preparation of 15 handbooks on the subject, with 500,000 copies distributed so far.

Bahmer also reported that four new handbooks are being readied and also sorts of workshops planned. The NARS program alone has resulted in the saving of some \$17.3 million in 1965, he said.

And President Johnson's January, 1965, "moratorium on the purchase of new filing cabinets" had reduced buying by 68 per cent (only 34,467 new ones last year) and has meant a saving of \$3.6 million.

Officials of the Health, Education and Welfare Department and the Office of Economic Opportunity said they were trying to rip into paperwork problems too. HEW used only six sheets to say so (but they covered both sides, for a total of 12 pages), and OEO five.

And the subcommittee reporter took it all down for the record, which will continue to grow today.